3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

vations extending over a series of years were available, it would probably be found that the precipitation varies considerably from year to year. For instance, according to reports the winter months of 1909–10 were attended by an unprecedented rainfall. On the whole, therefore, it is safe to assume that the observations of the engineers referred to represent a fair average of the precipitation of this region. 132

In consequence of the great rainfall and the constant saturation of the ground, floods are frequent along all the rivers of this region. These freshets come, of course, only when there is a continuous and an unusually heavy fall of rain for several hours, or, as sometimes happens, for several days. In the latter event the Rio Cayapas rises several feet at its mouth, which is itself upward of a mile wide, and where the lowness of the bordering lands permits the stream to spread over wide areas. Farther up-stream, where the hills confine its waters, the river rises much higher; and at some points, where for considerable distances there are no low flood-plains and where the banks are steep, it rises as high as fifty feet. 133 731

As a result of such conditions there has been developed a form of *pile-dwelling*, the *floor of* which is raised from six to twelve feet above the ground. The Cayapa always endeavor to build their houses as near the river as possible, on account of their dependence on it as a means of travel and for other purposes. The floods, however, must always be taken into account in selecting a site even for such a pile-dwelling, since at times of such 731 [342] 361 [487]

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

floods it not infrequently happens that the waters rise so high as completely to surround the house, and indeed sometimes to within a few inches of its floor.

The excessive rainfall naturally produces great humidity,[1] which would be very oppressive were it not for the fact that the sky is almost constantly overcast, so that the full power of the sun is rarely felt in the region. This fortunate circumstance renders the climate, which would otherwise be almost intolerable, very equable and pleasant.

Resources

Trees and plants

By virtue of the climatic conditions above set forth the vegetation of the Cayapa region is typically tropical. Almost every foot of ground is covered by a dense jungle growth comprising many species of trees, palms, shrubs, and smaller plants, and characterized by an abundance of vines and parasitic vegetation. So dense is this growth that it is practically impossible to travel on land even a short distance without the use of a machete.

Among the most important and characteristic plants of the region are the various species of palms, many of which are put to use by the Cayapa in one way or another. In the following list of the trees and plants of this section are given the Cayapa and the local Spanish names of those palms which are most useful to the

[1] One of the engineer's reports, above referred to, places the humidity at an average of about 80 per cent.

Cat. 116, pp.
9-11 AJ
[p. 6]